

Lessons Learnt on 20mph Limit Implementation

A 20's Plenty for Us Briefing Nov 2014 www.20splentyforus.org.uk/BriefingSheets/lessons_learned.pdf

20's Plenty



Where People Live

Hindsight informs future best practice. We ask “What could be done differently?” 20mph implementers have shared their experience in a Brake webinar¹ and with 20's Plenty for Us.

Cllr Roger Symonds (Lib Dem) of Bath and North East Somerset began campaigning for 20mph limits against officer and administration opposition. 20mph was key to his party's 2011 manifesto. He was glad that the police agreed to enforce where they could from the outset. If Roger could do it again he would prioritise driver education². “We could have done it quicker and more efficiently.” Only in one place did the local council not want 20mph. It took 3 years, one more than estimated. It cost £3 p. head (£500k/167,000 people). He recommends:

- 6 months of education and awareness (soft measures) prior to implementation.
- Be more ‘hands on’ with Senior Officer monitoring and reporting back to Cabinet (officers were initially concerned about enforcement and were unconvinced about the benefits yet the first 20mph areas showed falls in average speeds and the police enforced so council officers became more supportive)
- Simple “geographical roll-out” is better as “by collisions” wasn't consistent or understandable
- Reduce consultation to a minimum (based on having 6 months worth of education prior to implementation and since 20mph was a manifesto promise) as “leaflets to every household is excessive and expensive.”

Cllr Phil Jones (Labour) in Camden said “20mph limits is the most popular decision I've ever taken.” As 20mph had all party, scrutiny and public support, he felt he was “pushing on an open door” and he could have introduced 20mph quicker (rather than with an 18 month lead up) and with more confidence as to its popularity. Also he could have used lighter touch signage - some cobbles in a heritage area were painted with 20mph roundels and had to be quickly scrubbed clean after resident complaints. It's safer was the main message as this is hard to argue against – Slower speeds safer roads was the tagline. Facebook and twitter in particular were crucial and worked. Cllr Jones had his photo taken with the police, who didn't object to the 20mph limit.

Andrew Preston, Delivery Manager in Cambridge, said bus companies and local press queried whether 20mph limits would cause longer public transport journey times. However, council average speed and count data showed these worries were unfounded. The most common complaint is now “Why are you not introducing 20mph limits where I live?”

Emma Sheridan, lead 20mph officer in Brighton said at the 2013 National 20mph Conference that most people who started as anti-20mph limits were not well informed. Once their questions were answered, they became pro-20mph. Educating the public is therefore crucial. Taxis were given ‘20mph is the law’ stickers to help reduce fears regarding customer impatience.

¹ <http://brakepro.org/component/content/article/2-uncategorised/254-go-20-presentations> (till Sep 2015) & https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL9bvS3PRAOb29MgpOrjAsniqNRQO_VBqF voice recording

² <http://brakepro.org/assets/docs/event-resources/GO20-webinar-Oct14/presentation-GO20-Oct14-BANES.pdf> (till Sep 2015)

20's Plenty For Us campaigns for a 20mph default speed limit in residential streets without physical calming.

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